



# **Albert Cashier**

**By**

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**Livingston County  
Historical Society**



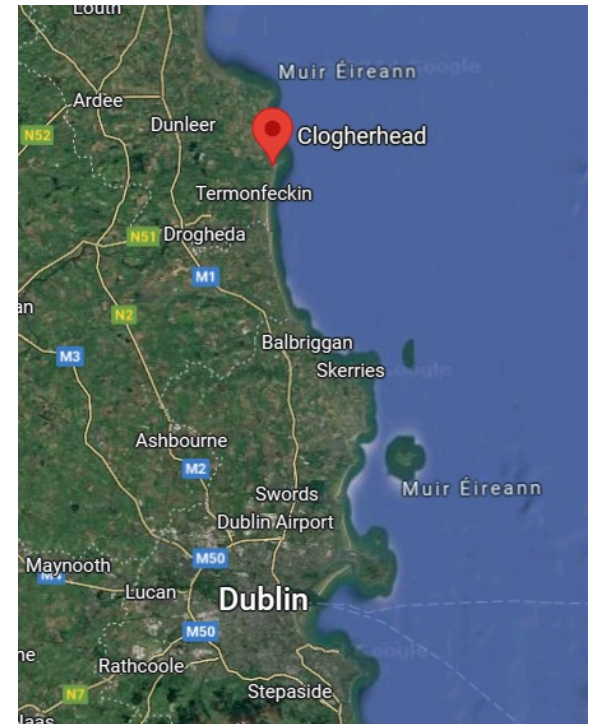
**Last Updated: April 13, 2025**

- Mary “Jennie” Rodgers
- Born December 25, 1843
- Clogherhead, County Louth, Ireland
- Parents were Denis Rodgers (1806-1882) and Catherine McGeeney (1808-1882)
- Both parents died in Ireland
- Had 2 brothers and 2 sisters



- East side of Ireland
- Residents in Clogherhead have traced her genealogy
- Residents have taken interest in this story in the 2010 – 2024 era.

- In Clogherhead, Ireland, tributes to Albert Cashier, born Jennie Rodgers, include a mural on Cecil's Wall and a proposed statue.
- The mural was unveiled in 2022 and depicts Cashier/Hodgers as a soldier.
- A stage production by Quintessential Theatre Company at the Droichead Art Centre also chronicled her life.







- Jenny Hodggers emigrated from Ireland to Belvidere, Illinois before 1862
- Some theories say she was a teenager when she emigrated



Great Famine > Period :

# 1845 – 1852

Image: Universal History Archive, UIG via Getty Images



Between **1845-52** Ireland suffered a period of starvation, disease and emigration that became known as the Great Famine. The potato crop, upon which a third of Ireland's population was dependent for food, was infected by a disease destroying the crop.

Ireland's population has still not recovered to the level before the Potato Famine as of 2024.



- Civil War began on April 12, 1861
- Confederate forces opened fire upon Fort Sumter in South Carolina

- Albert DJ Cashire joined the Union Army in Belvidere, IL. (mis-spelled)
- Elliott N. Bush joined him
- Officially mustered in on Sep. 4, 1862
- Became a Private in Company G of the 95th U.S. Infantry. 3 year enlistment
- 19 years old, height 5 foot 3 inches, auburn hair, blue eyes, light complexion
- Born in New York, single farmer





## 95th Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry

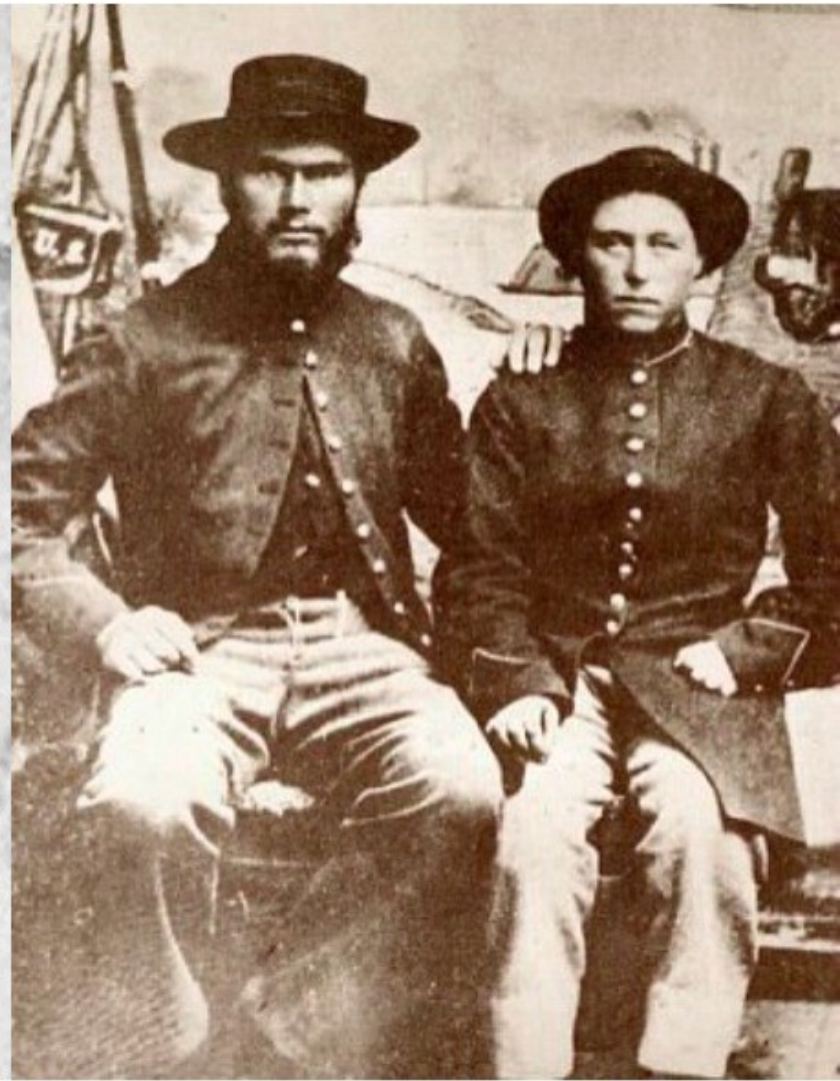


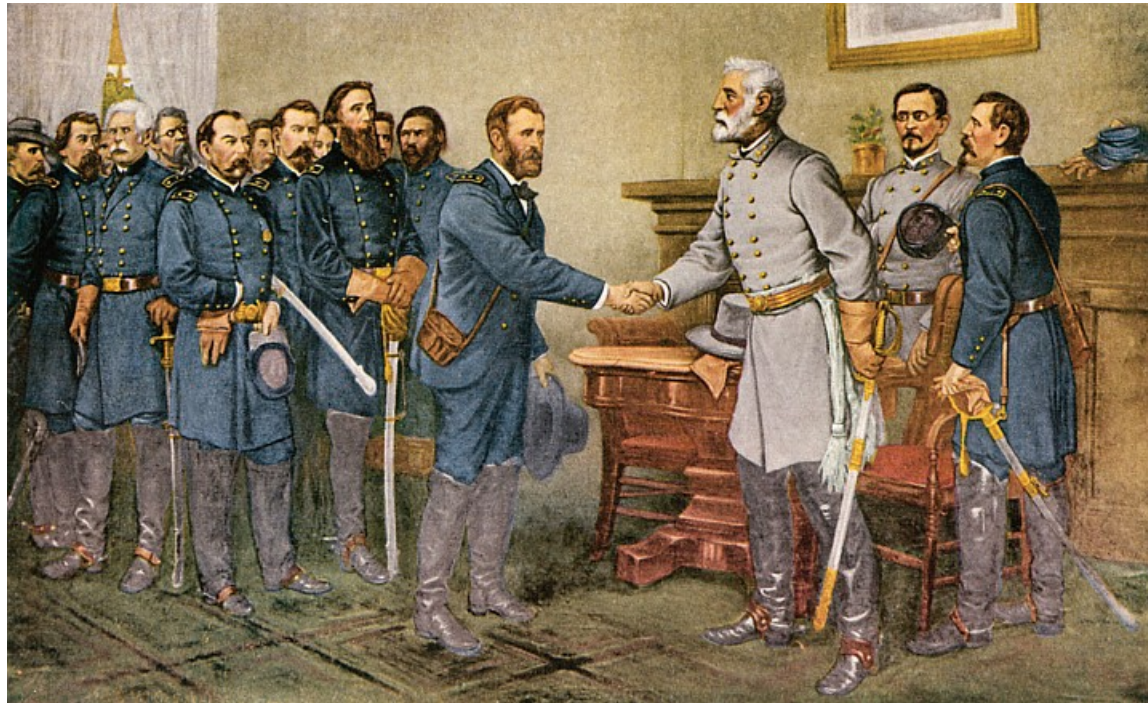
Illinois flag

<b>Active</b>	September 4, 1862, to August 17, 1865
<b>Country</b>	<a href="#">United States</a>
<b>Allegiance</b>	<a href="#">Union</a>
<b>Branch</b>	<a href="#">Infantry</a>
<b>Equipment</b>	<a href="#">Battle of Raymond</a> <a href="#">Battle of Jackson</a> <a href="#">Battle of Champion's Hill</a> <a href="#">Battle of Big Black River</a> <a href="#">Siege of Vicksburg</a> <a href="#">Battle of Pleasant Hill</a> <a href="#">Battle of Kennesaw Mountain</a> <a href="#">Battle of Atlanta</a> <a href="#">Battle of Jonesboro</a>

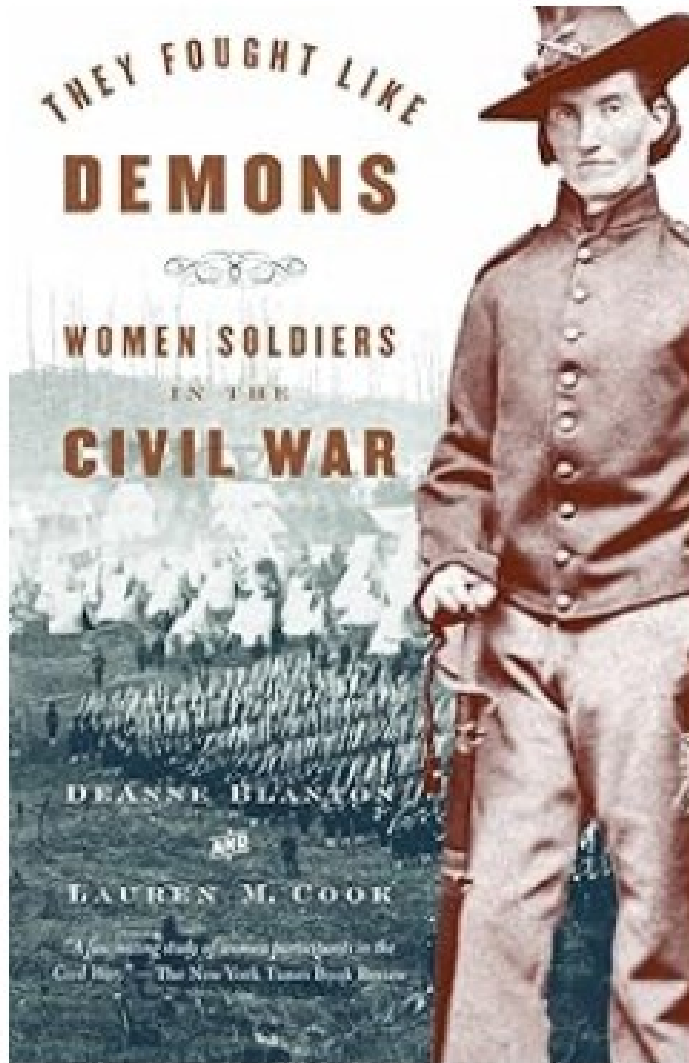
- Biggest battle was Siege of Vicksburg

- Many Livingston County soldiers also fought for Grant at Vicksburg





General Lee surrendered to General Grant at Appomattox Courthouse on April 9, 1865 effectively ending the Civil War



- 2002 book
- Women Soldiers in the American Civil War: They Fought Like Demons***
- by DeAnne Blanton and Lauren M. Cook.



Jennie Hodggers, alias Albert D. J. Cashier, was a case in point. She mustered out with the rest of the 95th Illinois Infantry on August 27, 1865, having served a full three-year enlistment. Hodggers then decided to live the rest of her life under her male identity, but her reasons for choosing this route were never clearly delineated. By 1865, her male persona was so definitely established with all her friends and associates that she may have felt she had no choice but to continue the masquerade. Hodggers was also an illiterate Irish immigrant with no apparent family ties in the United States, and she needed to make a living for herself once the war was over. She undoubtedly recognized that she would find many more employment opportunities if the world continued to perceive her as a man.



**Albert Cashier** lived in four Illinois towns, working as a laborer and briefly owning a plant nursery with a comrade from the war, before she settled permanently in Saunemin, Illinois, in 1869. She then held a variety of jobs as a farmhand, handyman, day laborer, child sitter, janitor, and property caretaker for more than forty years. She even served for a time as the town lamplighter. One of her steady employers, the Chesbro family, became so fond of their handyman that they bought Cashier a house to live in, always set a place for Cashier at their dinner table, and reserved a space in their family cemetery plot as Cashier's final resting place.

- 1884 Fairbury Blade

## **Saunemin News Section**

“Albert Cashier has left the post office, and is working at the tile factory.”

- 1887 Pontiac Sentinel  
(Albert Cashier was 44 years old)

Thursday afternoon Rev. M. Blair, of the M. E. church, baptised Albert Cashier in the baptistry of the Christian church. Mr. Cashier has been a member of the M. E. church for some time but had never been baptised, and chose immersion as the form.

# Women's Voting Rights

- President Wilson called a special session of Congress and in the spring of 1919, The House of Representatives passed the amendment followed by the Senate just a few months later.
- The 19th Amendment was adopted and officially became part of the U.S. Constitution on August 26, 1920
- Albert Cashier voted in many elections prior to 1920 in Saunemin. (1869 to about 1911 in Saunemin)

- 1888 Fairbury Blade

Albert Cashier's noble right arm refuses to do its duty this week, rheumatism having laid hold of it.

Albert was 45 years old in 1888.



- In 1890, with the help of a local attorney, Cashier applied for and received a veteran's pension.
- January 17, 1890, Pontiac Sentinel Newspaper...

Albert Cashier is putting up a small residence for his own occupancy. A few of his G. A. R. comrades are assisting him.

- In 1899, requested and received a larger pension because he was becoming disabled and found earning a living more difficult.
- 15 friends and former employers signed the request to the Pension Bureau.

- In later years, she ate with the neighboring Lannon family in Saunemin

- Later on, when Hodgers fell ill, the Lannons discovered that she was female when they asked a nurse to examine her, but they did not make their discovery public.

- In 1911, Cashier was hit by a car that broke her leg.
- A physician discovered her secret in the hospital, but did not disclose the information.

May 6, 1911, Dwight Star & Herald Newspaper

## SAUNEMIN

M. L. Paddock accompanied Albert Cashier to the soldiers' home at Quincy Wednesday. Mr. Cashier has been receiving the best of care here but he has no relatives and his enfeebled condition made the task of caring for him quite arduous. He will have a good home and the best of care at the home. He has long been a resident of Saunemin and takes the best wishes of many friends with him.





ALBERT D. J. CASHIER  
OF  
COMPANY G, 95TH ILLINOIS REGIMENT

Photographed November, 1864



ALBERT D. J. CASHIER  
OF  
COMPANY G, 95TH ILLINOIS REGIMENT

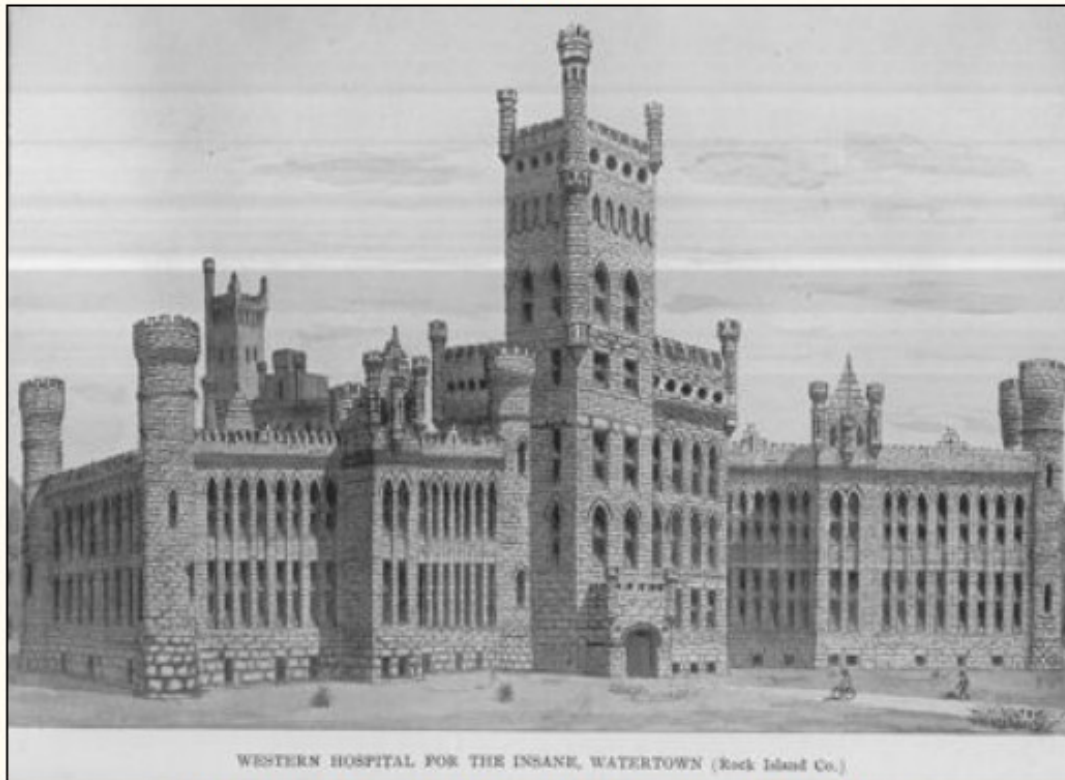
Photographed July, 1913

*Two pictures taken nearly fifty years apart — the earlier one was made during the war, and at the time of the latter, Private Cashier was at the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home at Quincy.*

# National Story

- Earliest newspaper story publishing that Albert Cashier was a woman who served as man in the Civil War:
  - May 4, 1913, The Illinois State Journal
- Commander of the Quincy Hospital was Colonel A. O. Anderson
- He knew she was a woman when she was admitted in 1911
- He agreed to keep the secret
- Now she was Judged to be Insane and was to be committed to the State Hospital
- Her real name was not known at that time

**Western Hospital for the Insane**  
**Watertown, Rock Island County**  
1898



***Western Hospital for the Insane, Watertown***  
*from Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois, 1901*

East Moline,  
Illinois

She was  
forced to  
wear  
women's  
clothing

# Death of Albert Cashier in 1915

- Died October 10, 1915, at Watertown State Hospital
- She was 71 years old when she died
- Was in Watertown Hospital for the Insane for 20 months
- Was buried in Saunemin's Sunny Slope Cemetery
- At her request, she was buried in her Civil War uniform
- Full military burial honors and government grave stone.





Saunemin Cemetery



# Other Women who served as Men in the Civil War

- Might have been hundreds of women that served as male soldiers
  - Only found 1 other person besides Albert Cashier that served and continued to act like a man after the Civil War
    - Otto Schaffer served in Civil War
    - Kansas farmer killed by lightning
    - Coroner found him to be a woman
- Ref: Blanton & Cook book

# Albert Cashier House

**May 10, 2006 Pantagraph**

- Built by J. G. Chesebro in Saunemin for his worker Albert Cashier (1860s to 1870s)
- Moved to Lannon family property in 1910 in Saunemin
- Moved to E. G. Bennett property, date unknown
- Moved to E. R. Smith property, used as hatchery in 1940s
- Moved to 4-H Park in Pontiac in 1962, care of Central States Thresherman's Reunion
- Returned to Saunemin to unknown location in 1986
- Moved to Street Department property in Pontiac 1995

**Betty Estes**

# Roger Kutzner House Story

- Roger tried to help renovate the house when it was in Pontiac
- He salvaged some old boards from his grandmother's house
  - Applied linseed oil to help preserve the old boards, then installed on the little house
- He also applied 1 coat of linseed oil and a 2<sup>nd</sup> coat of ½ linseed oil and half oil-based paint on the exterior
- Roger did have to skip one spot because of a wasp nest !!

- January 17, 1890, Pontiac Sentinel Newspaper...

Albert Cashier is putting up a small residence for his own accupancy. A few of his G. A. R. comrades are assisting him.

Does not agree with Pantagraph story saying it was built much earlier by Mr. Chesebro in 1870s or 1880s ?

- 2009 Renovation Started in Saunemin
- Intersection of Maple and Center Streets
- Very small..... 12 feet by 22 feet



- Was in bad shape
- Only things saved were window/door frames







# **Albert Cashier Info Nuggets**

- The Vicksburg campaign proved to be a challenge for Cashier, as she was captured while performing reconnaissance.
- Cashier managed to escape, however, and make her way back to the regiment.
- After the Battle of Vicksburg, in June 1863, Cashier contracted chronic diarrhea and entered a military hospital.
- Somehow, she evaded detection.

# Albert Cashier Info Nuggets

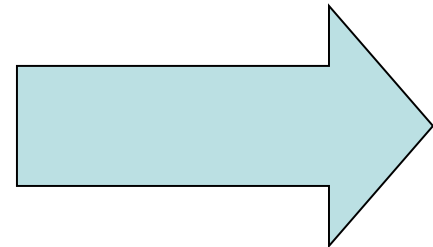
- Other soldiers thought that Cashier was small and preferred to be alone, which were not uncommon characteristics for soldiers.
- During her stay at the Soldiers and Sailors home in Quincy, Hodggers was visited by many of her fellow soldiers from the 95<sup>th</sup> Regiment.
- It took W.J. Singleton (executor of Cashier's estate) nine years to track Cashier's identity back to her birth name of Jennie Hodggers. None of the would be heirs proved convincing, and the estate of \$418.46 was deposited in the Adams County, Illinois, treasury.

# **Albert Cashier Info Nuggets**

- Proud of the record of his Company G, he would become incensed when the Saunemin village boys teased him by calling him a “drummer boy.”
- “I was a fighting infantryman,” he would shriek at them.

# Albert Cashier Legacy

1. Books
2. Wikipedia Page
3. Research Articles
4. Plays & Musicals
5. Videos



'The Little Soldier of the 95th: Albert D. J. Cashier' in 'Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society'

Clausius, Gerhard P

text  
still image

articles

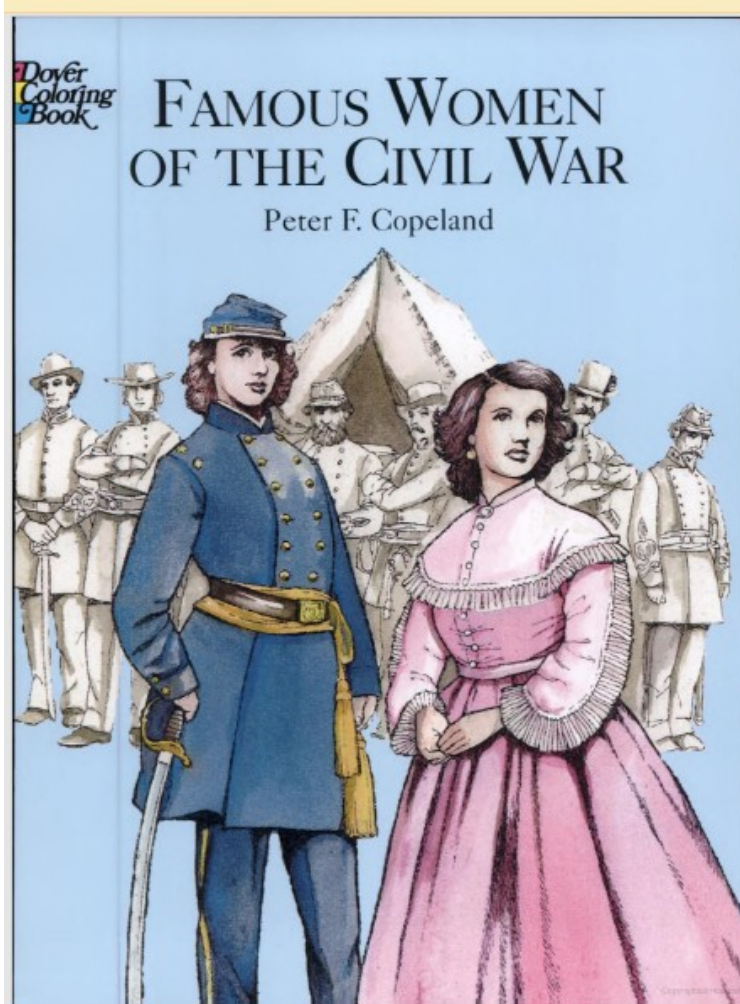
1958

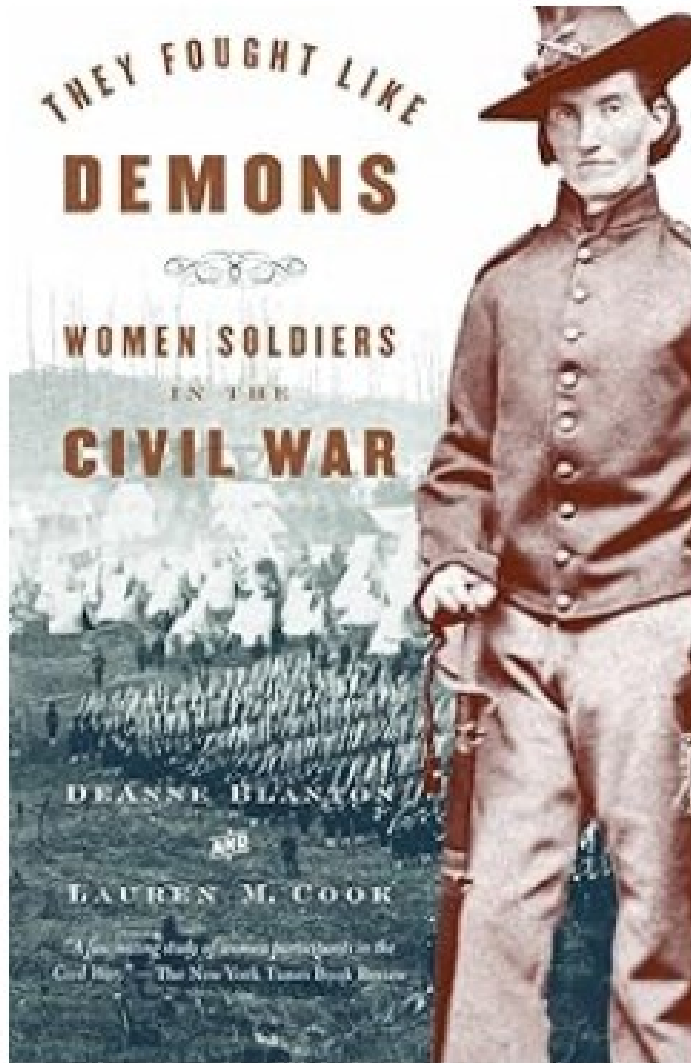
Illinois State Historical Society

Very interesting short  
article



# 1999 Coloring Book





- 2002 book
- Women Soldiers in the American Civil War: They Fought Like Demons***
- by DeAnne Blanton and Lauren M. Cook.

# Also Known As

Albert D.J. Cashier



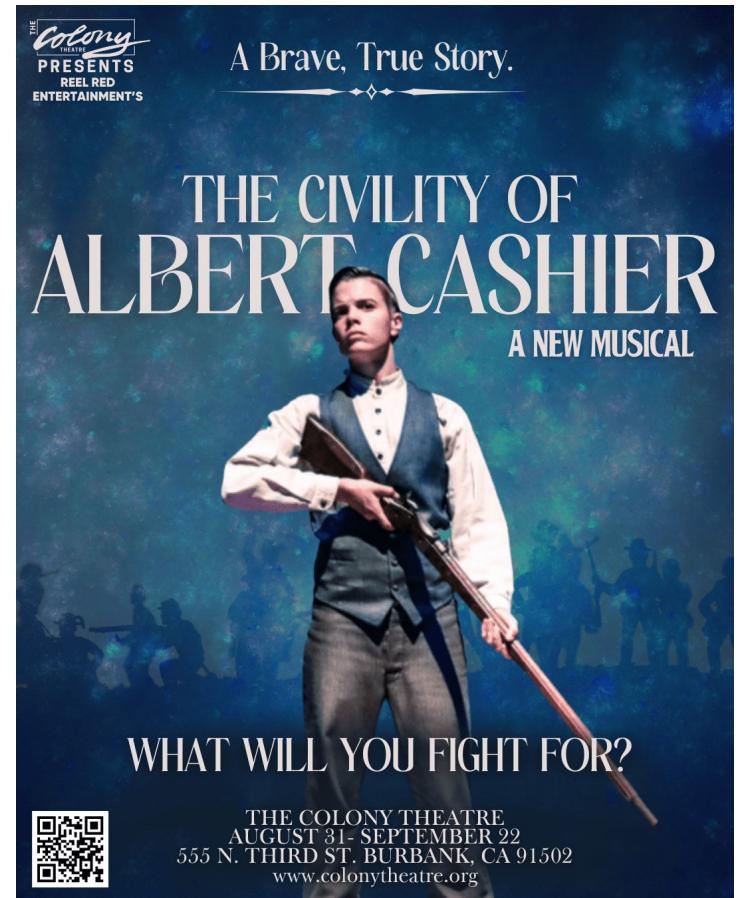
*The Jennie Hodgers Story,  
or How One Young Irish Girl Joined the  
Union Army During the Civil War*

by Lon P. Dawson

1995 Book

# 2017 Musical

A musical production in Chicago  
And California  
titled “The Civility of Albert Cashier”



# Videos

- 12+ videos on YouTube
- Some made by people from Ireland

# Closing Thoughts

- An amazing true story !
- Not a lot of reliable detailed information about her
  - When great interest was taken in her story in 1913/1914, she had been judged “Senile”
  - She told conflicting stories



# Closing Thoughts

- Why did she leave her parents in Ireland and come to America?
  - Very destitute conditions in Ireland from Potato Famine
- Why did she join the Army in Belvidere, Illinois in 1862 when 19 years old?
  - Way to stay with a boyfriend?
  - No good jobs for women?
  - Way to survive with food and clothing?

# Closing Thoughts

- How was she able to enter and stay in the Army as a man?
  - No physical entry exam
  - baggy uniforms
  - Union Army not very picky, needed bodies to fight  
(fathers lied about the age of their sons)

# Closing Thoughts

- Why did she continue to be a man after the Civil War?
  - All her friends were males
  - She was an illiterate 22 year-old Irish Immigrant with no family in America
  - Much easier to get a job and support yourself if a man.

**Questions?**